

DEVELOPING COMPLEX REASONING

THE ANALYTICAL TOOLBOX

Paraphrase x3

Goal: to dispel the idea that the meanings of words are self-evident.

1. **Paraphrase** another writer's claim, counter-claim, or a key piece of evidence that supports their own claim or sub-claim. Do not only use synonyms, but change the structure of the sentence(s) in order to open up the possible meanings of the words.
2. **Paraphrase** the same passage two more times, this time replacing all key words with new words. Your language should go for more than the gist of the sentence(s) but attempt to fully re-explain the sentence(s). This will help with re-interpretation.
3. **Re-read** the original passage and reflect in writing on what you now understand about it given your paraphrasing work. This reflection is foundational reasoning work.

Notice & Focus

Goal: to deepen thinking about evidence

1. **Notice** - Repeatedly answer the question “**what do you notice?**” about an idea, article or evidence set rather than making evaluative statements (“what you like/dislike”) or analytical statements (“what does this mean). The question “what do you notice?” leads to deeper observation. Be sure to cite specific examples rather than making general claims.
2. **Focus** – Rank the details you have chosen from most to least INTERESTING (as opposed to those you like or dislike).

Finish the following statements to determine the order:

What is most interesting about the argument/text/evidence is _____. (An interesting detail might create questions rather than answer them)

What is most strange about the argument/text/evidence is _____. (A strange detail might defamiliarize something that we thought we understood so that we see it in a new light.)

What is most revealing about the argument/text/evidence is _____. (A revealing detail might give you a sense that there is greater meaning behind what you observe.)

3. **Notice** - Explain why the three items you selected struck you as the most significant. This is your chance to make **interpretive** leaps about the meaning of what you found most interesting through freewriting and making connections.

4. Focus - Looking over your responses, consider how the statements you have made relate to one another. How does what is strange relate to what is interesting? Underline parts that connect and relate and freewrite about the relationship.

5. Notice Again – Go back to your subject and see what else you notice now that you have some ideas about meaning. What else strikes you as revealing?

10 to 1

Goal: to spend more time investigating each piece of evidence because it is better to have 10 ideas about 1 piece of evidence, than to have only one simple idea about 10 pieces of evidence

1. Choose one major piece of evidence from your argument to analyze. Make it a significant piece.
2. Come up with 10 possible interpretations of this evidence. What are the different meanings that it suggests?
3. Choosing just a few of your interpretations, ask yourself **So What?** What is the implication of this idea?
4. Repeat this exercise using another piece of evidence, then see if you can find connections between your first list and your second.
5. Form a working claim statement that encompasses your observations, interpretations and implications.

Telescope Writing

Goal: to deepen thinking about one idea or piece of evidence while making connections between ideas to develop a line of reasoning

1. **Freewrite** on your initial claim, idea or piece of evidence you wish to examine. Write at least a page.
2. **Read and re-read** what you have written. On the second reading, underline the sentence or set of sentences that seem the most important, complex or interesting to you.
3. **Copy those sentences** onto the top of a fresh page. Freewrite for a full page about why these sentences are so important, complex, or interesting. What do they reveal? What questions do they raise? What other ideas do they connect to?
4. **Repeat** the process in steps 2 and 3 as many times as you feel compelled to.
5. When you are finished, **re-read all the sentences you underlined**, noticing the connections between them and how they might point to a line of reasoning you wish to develop further.